

Remarks on the Arkansas Tornado Damage *January 22, 1999*

Good morning. I was very sad to learn of the terrible losses suffered by the people of Arkansas as tornadoes swept through Little Rock, North Little Rock, and 16 other counties in my home State last night.

As you know, there has been considerable loss of life, and we are still getting reports. The fact that the Governor's Mansion, where Hillary and I raised Chelsea for 12 years, was actually in the path of the storm made it all the more real to me.

Director Witt has just briefed me on the damage. He and I have faced challenges like this before at home because Arkansas gets so very many tornadoes. And we are deeply committed to doing everything we can to help the people there recover.

I have been in touch with the mayor of Little Rock this morning and expect to talk to more of the officials as the day goes on. We will be working with them to get whatever appropriate assistance is required. And our thoughts and prayers are with them. And I expect to get further briefing from Mr. Witt to determine what, if anything else, we should do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, upon returning from the National Academy of Sciences. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock, AR.

Statement on the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Conflict *January 22, 1999*

The United States remains deeply concerned about the risk of armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and strongly committed to help find a peaceful resolution to their border dispute.

As part of this effort, I asked former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake to return to Eritrea and Ethiopia during the last week. This was his fourth visit since October. During his visit, Mr. Lake met with Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary Salim Ahmed Salim, Eritrean President Isaias Afworki, and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

In their meetings with Mr. Lake, the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia reaffirmed their engagement with the OAU's peace process, which the United States strongly supports. In this context, the United States urges both parties to accept the OAU's Framework Agreement and its agreed implementation in order to achieve a peaceful resolution of the dispute. Ethiopia has

accepted the OAU Framework, and Eritrea awaits certain clarifications from the OAU.

The United States remains deeply concerned, however, about the continuing military buildup along the common border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and about the implications of this buildup for renewed hostilities. We call on both parties to exercise reason and restraint and to maintain their commitment to the peaceful solution that we are convinced is within reach.

Ethiopia and Eritrea have made remarkable strides in the last few years in overcoming a past of repression, famine, and war. Both nations have promising futures. Both are good friends of the United States. We ask them not to risk what they have gained in a conflict that cannot possibly benefit the people of either side. We pledge our own best efforts, in partnership with Ethiopia and Eritrea, to avert a tragedy and to advance the interests that continue to unite the people of both nations.